

How UCook's paying it forward as partners feel the pinch

 By [Sindy Peters](#)

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'Together apart' has been the global rallying call as humanity unites in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, and South African meal-kit delivery company UCook, through a number of its initiatives, has stepped up in answer.

Its latest effort, UCook for Restaurants, aims to assist the local industry which continues to feel the financial pinch, with many struggling to keep their doors open.



David Torr, CEO, UCook

"It's no secret that the Covid pandemic and resultant lockdown has brought the vibrant and diverse local hospitality industry to a tragic halt and a lot of the establishments that we've come to know and love are at risk of closing their doors. Despite the recent relaxation for the sector, restaurant owners are still desperately trying to find a way to support their staff as well as managing expenses," explains UCook CEO David Torr.

"We launched UCook for Restaurants to help support an industry that has supported UCook since the beginning. For years we have partnered with restaurants in an attempt to bring food that excites and inspires into people's homes.

"These partnerships have contributed to our success and there's no better time to pay it forward."



UCook launches cook-along campaign to support local restaurants

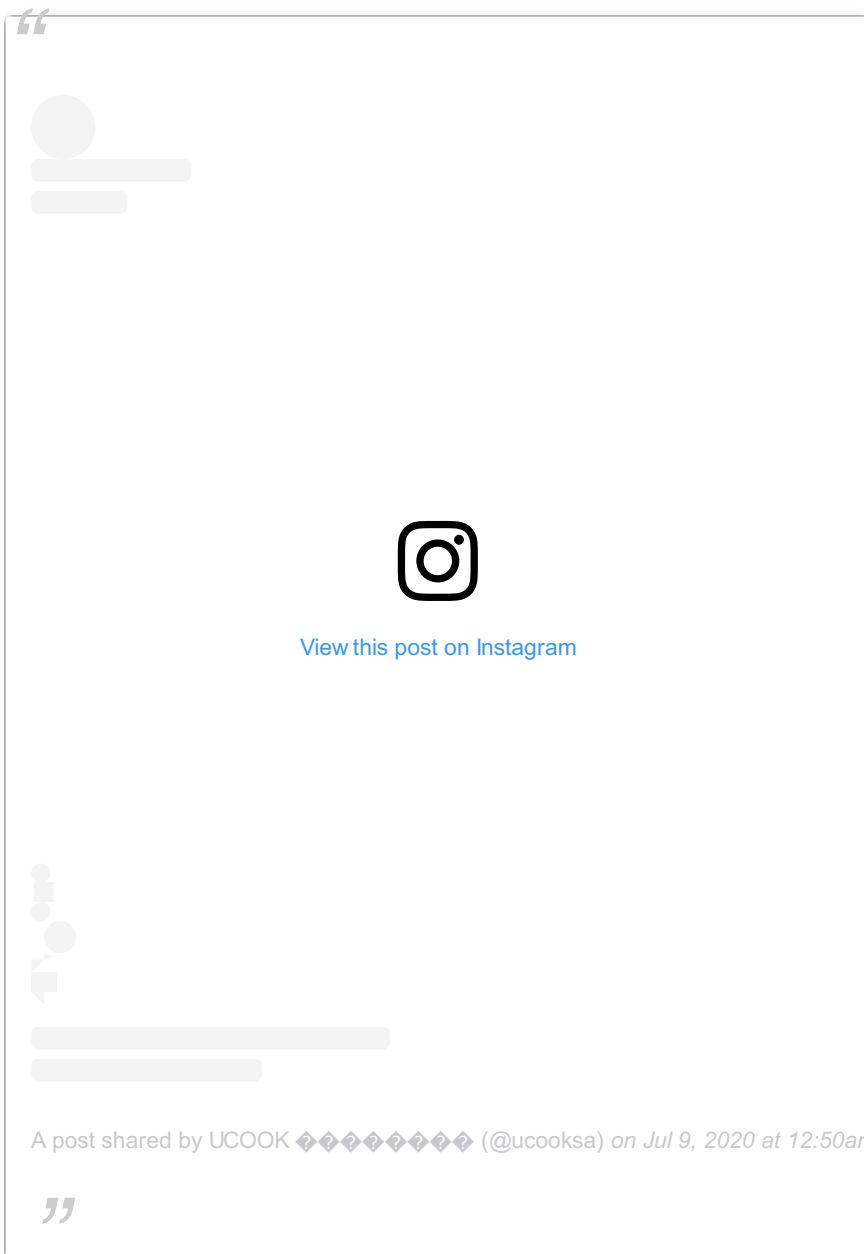
18 Jun 2020



More than a cook-along

UCook for Restaurants' live cook-alongs launched late last month across the company's online channels and first up to the plate was The Kitchen's Chef Karen Dudley. On the menu was The Kitchen's seared leg of lamb with chermoula and pine nuts - with the freshest ingredients delivered by UCook, the dish was both delightful to put together and devour. The experience, though, is more than just learning to cook good food with an expert chef - we got to share in the vibrant Dudley's love for food and her passion for cooking for people.

Sadly, after 11 years, The Kitchen has had to close its doors as the pandemic has taken too much of a toll on what was once a thriving business. A portion of the revenue from the UCook for Restaurants initiative will help support The Kitchen's staff, and may be a saving grace for other establishments that are also taking strain. Whether or not ordering from UCook, the restaurateurs featured in the initiative can still be supported via an instant donation mechanism on UCook's media channels. Upcoming UCook-alongs will feature Jerusalem's Chef Reuben Riffel on 14 July, and Il Leone's Daniel Toledo on 21 July.



A post shared by UCOOK (👍👍👍👍👍👍) (@ucooksa) on Jul 9, 2020 at 12:50am PDT

Says Torr, "The response from our audience has been wonderful and it's shown us that our customers are really willing to stand behind the establishments they love. I think it's also been a welcome distraction for many from the current anxiety and stress surrounding health and Covid."

UCook Food Fund helps feed Cape Town's hungry

As an essential service provider, UCook was able to continue operating throughout the lockdown and saw an uptick in orders which Torr attributes largely to consumers' increased reliance on e-commerce. Given their fortunate position, they've made every effort to give back where possible.



UCook Food Fund raises over R1m to help fight hunger during Covid-19 pandemic
8 Jun 2020



Launched in April in partnership with FoodForward South Africa, the Philippi Economic Development Initiative (PEDI) and Ladles of Love, the UCook Food Fund managed to raise R1m to help feed some of Cape Town's most vulnerable communities, with a particular focus on the Philippi area. Donations are still open and can be made [here](#).

UCook Market Box supports local small-scale food producers

Another recently launched initiative, developed in partnership with the Oranjezicht City Farm Market, is the UCook Market Box which aims to help small-scale farmers make ends meet during the Covid-19 crisis. The Market Box, the contents of which changes weekly, delivers fresh, seasonal ingredients and artisanal food products to consumers, showcasing local food producers and their produce. Sourcing products from many small outlets, UCook is able to support multiple suppliers of the same product.



UCook Market Box launched to support small-scale farmers

30 Jun 2020



"Since inception, UCook has maintained an ethos centred around making a positive impact in the space in which we operate. We have always invested heavily in our sourcing protocols, supplier partnerships and ethical business practice, and this has translated (particularly during this pandemic) into addressing the fundamental needs of those most affected.

"Knowing that we're making a difference, however big or small, in people's lives is what keeps us motivated – from making dinner time easier for a family, to giving a route to market to a small-scale local farmer and doing our part to fight hunger," says Torr.

"Our commercial goal is by no means the only driver at UCook and through our feeding schemes and the campaign in the hospitality space, we feel comfortable that we are benefiting a ream of individuals and businesses less fortunate than ourselves. Collaboration is key. We need to work together to overcome the challenges that our country faces."

ABOUT SINDY PETERS

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